

29 May 1953

Summary of Indications of
Possible Changes in
Yugoslavia's International Position

Events in the last several months suggest that an improvement in diplomatic relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia may be expected during the remainder of 1953. It is not likely, however, that such improvement will produce a detente between the two governments or will basically alter Yugoslav relations with the West.

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Yugoslavia's Position in Relation to the Orbit

Several recent incidents have aroused speculation as to the nature of present and future relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia. In appointing Kirsanov as charge, the Soviet Union has selected a diplomat experienced in satellite affairs. A Yugoslav basketball team has been sent to a tournament in Moscow. The recently successful negotiation of an agreement on the Iron Gates dispute, though vital to the economic interests of both Yugoslavia and Rumania, two weeks after Yugoslavia withdrew several of its delegates due to lack of progress and also after Molotov's talk with Yugoslav charge Djuric in Moscow, suggested the possibility that the accord may have been stimulated by the Soviet Union. However, as indications, these events have been somewhat cancelled out by other factors. The Yugoslav basketball team, which was admitted along with the Israeli team, was accorded an organized hostile reception. The United States Embassy in Moscow reported on 29 May that there was no reason to believe that Djuric's calls at the Foreign Office were other than brief and as reported, and that he seems to have over-emphasized his polite reception by Molotov and the relaxation of surveillance by the police. On 30 April US Ambassador Bohlen reported that Djuric had told him that although he had been received by Molotov (the first time a Yugoslav representative had been received since the break), the Yugoslav Government was under no illusions as to the basic Soviet attitude toward Yugoslavia. Border incidents have continued with the satellites and the vituperative Soviet publication For a New Yugoslavia continues to be published. However, it does seem probable that the Soviet Union may make additional overtures of friendship leading to an improvement of diplomatic relations between the two countries, possibly including the exchange of representatives of higher diplomatic rank.

From Tito's point of view, reaffiliation with the Orbit would hold little appeal. His objections in 1948 centered on excessive Soviet control and the suppression of Yugoslav national interests. The change of top-level personalities in the Kremlin does not appear to have alleviated the basic causes of the disagreement. It is improbable that the new Soviet regime will be willing to make the concessions which Tito would demand for actual reaffiliation with the Orbit. To grant to Yugoslavia the political autonomy and economic independence within the Orbit, which she would undoubtedly demand, would produce consequences jeopardizing Soviet control of her European Satellites. An important factor about which little information is available is the extent of Cominform influence in Yugoslavia. The US Embassy in Belgrade estimates that it is negligible on the policy-making level.

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Yugoslavia's Position in Relation to the West

The Yugoslav Government has steadily strengthened its ties with the West since 1949. This rapprochement with the West culminated in 1953 with the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Greece and Turkey, and with Tito's visit to Great Britain. The Treaty was signed on February 28 and unanimously ratified in Yugoslavia on March 23. This solidification of relations with the West undoubtedly has been motivated in large measure by the insecurity of Yugoslavia's isolated position. The differences and tensions still existing between Yugoslavia and the West complicate its relations to the degree that its dependability and availability as an ally might be brought into question. It does not appear, however, that the Soviet Union can exploit any of these issues in such a way as to attract Yugoslavia back into the Orbit.

Tito and Yugoslav leaders have reiterated on various occasions their loyalty to the West. On May 21, Tito, apparently disturbed by suggestions to the contrary, reaffirmed his loyalty to the West, and said that Yugoslavia would not return to the Soviet bloc, though he would welcome "tolerable" relations with the USSR. In January 1953, in a somewhat similar vein, Tito denied to Ambassador Allen that his speech of December 16, 1952, claiming that Yugoslavia had another "outcome" if not accepted as an ally, implied a return to neutralism or was directed against the policies of the United States. Under no circumstances, he said, would Yugoslavia return to the Cominform. On March 6 Kardelj, an Executive Council vice president, told Ambassador Allen that Yugoslavia would rebuff any overture the Soviet Union might now make. He said that the Yugoslav quarrel was not with Stalin personally, but with the "bureaucratic, dictatorial system" and as long as the system continued, there was no possibility of a change in Yugoslav attitude. During the talks in March 1953, Churchill agreed with Tito's insistence that the assumption of an attack only against Yugoslavia was unrealistic, and that there was no point in attempting joint planning on this basis. Upon his return, Tito declared on 31 March that "In case of an aggression, we will be on the side against aggression." This implication of unity with the West was more clearly reaffirmed by Djilas in March 1953 when he told a group of US newspapermen that Yugoslavia would immediately enter the fight if the USSR should attack the West. In April 1953, Djerdja, Foreign Office Counselor, emphasized to US Embassy officials the close proximity of Yugoslavia to Rumania, and stressed his government's determination to resist Soviet imperialism. There is no indication in these expressions of Yugoslav leaders that its solidarity with the West has been weakened.

Relations between Yugoslavia and Italy have continued on a strained basis. This has been focused in the problem of Trieste, in the Italian fear of Yugoslav activity against Albania, and in the Italian objections to Yugoslav affiliation with NATO and concern over the Balkans' Treaty. Tito's speech of May 17 contained one of his most violent denunciations of Italy and of De Gasperi. However, Trieste aside, Tito emphasized the

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need for close cooperation in economic and mutual defense matters between the two countries. If Yugoslavia were to become a member of the Soviet camp, it could expect the West more fully to support the Italian claims in Trieste. The tripartite declaration of 1948 in support of Italian claims to all of Trieste should reinforce the logic of this conclusion in Yugoslav thinking.

Yugoslav leaders and press have indicated some disagreement in recent months with US foreign policy. On May 17, Tito called the Churchill speech asking for a big power meeting "one of the most significant made during the past few years". Tito's statement was made against a background of Yugoslav press criticism of some aspects of American foreign policy. In April 1953, the US Embassy felt it necessary to discuss with Djerdja the Yugoslav press attacks on the US concept of the inter-relation of events in Asia. These newspaper attacks had attempted to distinguish the "aggressive" character of the Korean from the "colonialist" character of the Indochina and Malayan conflicts. Such criticism of US policy has not indicated a substantial divergence from overall Western aims, and has not been of the character to suggest any agreement with Soviet policy.

Changes in Yugoslavia's Ideological Position since the Break

During the first part of 1953 there has been some intensification of trends evident last year which differentiated Yugoslavia from its more rigid Communist neighbors and liberalized its government to some extent. Particularly since the reformulation of goals which occurred at the Yugoslav Communist Party Congress in November there have been increased efforts by Belgrade to prove its claim to represent a different type of Communism. Internally, compulsory agricultural collectivization has been abandoned; incentives have been introduced to increase industrial production; wage and price controls have been weakened; bans on emigration and admission of tourists have been lifted; and Yugoslavia has made some effort to reduce ill feeling caused by the break with the Vatican by attempting to initiate talks on the church problem. These are small changes, but they do testify to the reorientation of Tito's regime since its break with the Cominform.

Comparable to these changes in internal economic and social policy have been shifts in Yugoslavia's pattern of dealing with foreign countries. Yugoslavia has seemed anxious to play a dynamic and important role in world politics, supporting the international Socialist position, as at the Rangoon conference, and encouraging "Titoism" within the Soviet Orbit. Tito and his adherents represent their approach as the genuinely Marxist one, portraying Stalinism as a deviation. It seems unlikely that he would be willing to jeopardize this newly developed ideological and power position to return to Soviet domination.

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RECENT INDICATIONS OF NO CHANGE
IN STATUS OF YUGOSLAV INTERNATIONAL POSITION

6 March	<u>Borba</u> article on systematic border provocations by Satellites
6 March	Kardelj, a vice president of the Executive Council, claims Yugoslavia's quarrel not with Stalin personally but with the "bureaucratic, dictatorial system"
Early March	Djilas, a vice president of the Executive Council, maintains that Yugoslavia would immediately enter the fight if the USSR should attack the West
mid-March	Tito visits Great Britain
17 March	Hungarian protest to Yugoslavia on attempts to smuggle agents
18 March	Yugoslavian note to Bulgaria protesting border incidents
23 March	Yugoslavia ratifies the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Greece and Turkey
26 March	Hungarian note to Yugoslavia protesting recent border violations
mid-April	Djerdja, Foreign Office Counselor, emphasizes Yugoslavia's determination to resist Soviet imperialism
23 April	Yugoslav note to Hungary on 23 border incidents in March-- said the ignoring of prior protests showed true role of Hungarian Government in these activities
28 April	Yugoslav note to Bulgaria protesting frontier violations
29 April	Yugoslavia withdraws part of delegation to Iron Gates conference with Rumania due to lack of progress
30 April	Yugoslav note to Hungary protesting wounding of frontier guard
late April	Djuric tells Bohlen Yugoslavia under no illusions as to basic Soviet attitude toward Yugoslavia even though he had just been received by Molotov
9 May	Yugoslav Foreign Minister's protest to Hungary on Hungarian description of 5 May border incident as false
mid-May	FBIS reports no change in quantity or quality of Orbit radio propaganda to and about Yugoslavia
mid-May	No change in number of border incidents since Stalin's death

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16 May	Yugoslav note to Bulgaria protesting persecution of Yugoslav citizens there
21 May	Tito reaffirms loyalty to the West
late May	Yugoslav press protests Western press interpretation of recent events as foreshadowing Yugoslav-Soviet detente

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RECENT INDICATIONS
OF POSSIBLE RAPPROCHEMENT
BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND THE ORBIT

15 April	Conference of Yugoslavia and Rumania on administration of Iron Gates opened (meeting proposed by Yugoslavia in February)
29 April	Molotov received Yugoslav Charge Djuric for first time since the break
1 May	Absence of usual Soviet May Day slogan excoriating Tito
15 May	Yugoslav-Rumanian agreement on questions of arbitration of Iron Gates disputes in the future
mid-May	Yugoslav basketball team sent to tournament in Moscow
18 May	Appointment of new Soviet charge to Yugoslavia, S. P. Kirsanov
25 May	Further agreement between Yugoslavia and Rumania on administration of Iron Gates

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